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ABSTRACT

We can identify and describe alternate paths of adulthood utilizing data from interviews with single adults. Our review of major models used in adulthood studies suggests that a developmental model, such as Daniel Levinson's life cycle model, is too tied to the notion of the imminent unfolding of the life course. The age-stratification theory recognizes role reproduction required by social structure, but never questions the locus of reproductive power. Finally, the socialization theory grants individuals some interactive freedom, but still overemphasizes socialization of the individual into existing roles. We propose a life spiral model, which involves the ordering of roles in various sequences, a multiplicity of institutionalized/emerging roles, and varying durations that these roles are enacted. A constant is the necessity for expressing human needs, such as intimacy, meaningful work, avocational activities, and social interaction. We re-analyzed data from a sample of sixty predominantly professional women and men, ages twenty-five to forty-five. The sample did not follow a traditional path to adulthood; their life courses involved many nontraditional experiences. We suggest that our society contains alternate paths through adulthood which could best be explained by a life spiral model. (CSS)

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THE ADULT LIFE SPIRAL:

A CRITIQUE OF THE LIFE CYCLE MODEL

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This paper represents an equal and full co-authorship. The authors alternate the listing of their names in succeeding papers.

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Introduction

The breakdown of the ideological consensus regarding adulthood in American society during the past few decades has resulted in the emergence of several competing patterns of adulthood. This breakdown is reflected in the increasing number of men and women who are experiencing life events that do not conform or only partially conform to the stages and sequences of the life cycle model.[1] In one lifetime it is no longer unusual for an adult to pursue more than one career, several interpersonal relationships in or outside of marriage, live in different types of households, and to question traditional role commitments to occupation, parenthood and citizenship.[2]

In this paper we identify and describe alternate paths of adulthood utilizing data from an interview sample of single adults and compare our findings with those reported by Daniel Levinson and his associates (1978) based on interviews with married adult men. Levinson's work is based on a life cycle framework that presumes one pattern of adulthood. We propose a life spiral framework to revise life cycle theory so as to accommodate a pluralistic universe of adult life styles and structures.

Models of Adulthood

What are the major models utilized in studies of adulthood? We will briefly review the assumptions, implications and limitations of three major models: (1) developmental, (2) age-stratification and generation formation, and (3) role socialization.

I. Developmental Models

The major model utilized by social science and psychiatry is Erik Erikson's theory of the life course as consisting of stage specific ego crises (Clausen, 1972:460).[3] Although there are many other versions of developmental theory, stages imply that development is hierarchical, is sequenced in time, and is cumulative (Brim, 1977).

The implications of life-course stages are that (1) every "normal" adult must pass through the stages; (2) each stage has distinctive qualities which are tasks that must be accomplished during that stage and an individual is more or less successful in negotiating these crises; (3) successful resolution of a prior stage is necessary for the successful resolution of subsequent stages, an implication of hierarchy; and (4) stages are tied to specific categories (Brim, 1977).

Proponents of the adult life cycle have continued to identify ordered sequence of tasks. For example, in Daniel Levinson's latest work stages are called seasons, but they still have the same basic characteristics. "Although important changes go on within it, each season or era has its own distinctive and unifying qualities, which have to do with the character of living" (1978:18).

However, delineating life-course stages is problematic (Clausen, 1972). When stages can be linked to the maturational level of the organism, as in childhood and early adolescence, specific tasks and developmental phases salient to a given period

can be identified. We suggest that adulthood is qualitatively different from childhood and does not consist of an innate sequence of developmental stages.

II. Age-Stratification and Generation Formation

The central question in the area of formations of generations is how much importance can properly be assigned to chronological age in the analysis of adulthood?

In Aging and Society (1972) Matilda White Riley, Marilyn Johnson, and Anne Foner present age as a basis for stratification. For Riley et al., age is a social position that locates the members of society in an "age strata." It also assigns social roles to given age strata. Aging is the process of mobility from one age stratum to the next. Each age stratum has its distinctive subculture and for a number of characteristics, such as occupational patterns, leisure time activities, marital statuses, etc., there are patterns that are different for the young, middle aged and the old (1972:420).

In a recent statement of the age stratification thesis Foner and Kertzer (1978) suggest that age and aging are essential components of social structure and change. In a comparative essay on transitions over the life course in traditional East African tribes and contemporary American society they find cohort succession across the boundaries of age strata to be a source of both conflict and change (1978:1102). These conflicts, the authors assert, are as significant as the class conflicts identified by Marx.

Elder (1975) suggests that the authors of Aging and Society tend to stress the social demographic aspects of cohort differentiation and succession. Gunnar Landtman (1938) points out that for any criteria to provide an enduring basis of social differentiation it must be capable of being inherited. While personal attributes such as strength, honor, and age may differentiate among persons and may form the bases for stratification, they are characteristics that are created anew for each generation and thus do not acquire as much "facticity" (Durkheim, 1966) as does wealth. Wealth, because it can be accumulated and passed on, provides a superior basis for class formation. Thus Landtman concludes that "property renders the grouping of classes far more permanent than would be the case under the influence of personal superiority or inferiority alone" (1938).

In a recent study of East African urban life Powdermaker (1962) found that much of the age stratification of East African tribal societies has diminished in the wake of colonization, decolonization and urbanization.[4] With respect to the issue of age vs. class conflict in the United States, the emphasis of age stratification theory on age cohorts masks intergenerational transmission of inequalities which importantly differentiate subpopulations (Tumin, 1967).

Age stratification attempts to buttress functionalist theory by providing a universalistic criterion that cannot be disputed. While other universalistic attributes, such as sexual differentiation, have been found by critics of functionalism to be ideologically rooted (Gouldner, 1970), age is seemingly neutral.

Mannheim (1952) proposed a framework for a sociological understanding of adulthood in terms of generational units that develop different responses to the social and intellectual currents of an historical era. For Mannheim:

> The generation unit represents a much more concrete bond than the actual generation as such. Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same generation; while those groups within the same generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways, constitute separate generation units (1952:304).

For example, according to Mannheim, the Napoleonic wars generated two polar forms of response among German youth to a common historical stimulus and thus two generation units, "romantic conservative" youth and a "liberal rationalist" group. Mannheim's approach to the problem of generations emphasizes that there is no particular number of years attached to the emergence of new generational events.

> Whether a new generation style emerges every year, every thirty, every hundred years, or whether it emerges rhythmically at all, depends entirely on the trigger action of the social and cultural process (1952:310).

Thus, while for Riley and her colleagues the major determining characteristic of generations is their chronological entry into the social structure, while historical influences are of secondary importance, for Mannheim the historical events are of primary importance in forming generations, while chronological age is of secondary importance.

A sociology of adulthood should guard against committing the naturalistic fallacy of deducing social phenomena from natural facts.

While generations are ultimately based on birth and death they do not exist as social phenomena until persons of a similar age organize around social, political and intellectual issues "as generation units."

III. Role Socialization Models

Socialization theory "refers to the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less able members of their society" (Brim, 1966:3). Although socialization theory notes the importance of both "how society manages to socialize the individual so that the work of society gets done and how individuals manage gradually to transform the social system in which they live," socialization models focus more strongly on questions of social order than change. Brim notes that in adulthood change many stem from several sources both external and internal to the individual.[5]

What is not dealt with in socialization models is how alternate social roles emerge in society (such as long-term singlehood)or how deviant roles become less deviant and become legitimate roles (such as single parents, cohabitation, etc.).

How can we explain the spread of these alternative and new adult roles? It is our thesis that various social movements, including the Civil Rights movement of the late 50's and early 60's, the anti-war movement of the mid and late 60's, and the Women's movement of the late 60's and early 70's, have resulted in the creation of new generation units by altering the consciousness of a substantial segment of the population. These movements questioned

the assumption of many traditional adult roles as well as other social structures (Horowitz, 1970:127). They were commonly joined in their struggle against the rigid traditionalist pattern of adult life. By their very opposition to the status quo these movements encouraged the expression of alternative adult roles on a larger scale than heretofore known.

The formation of new means of adult socialization has fostered the creation of alternative roles. Consciousness raising groups, individual psychotherapy, group therapy and friendship networks provide the locus of socialization into alternate adult roles. Consciousness raising groups, for example, evaluate old roles, provide new role models and social supports for neophytes entering new roles. Films, novels, and TV programs often depict alternative roles in a favorable light and provide support for persons experiencing role exit and entry.[7]

The culmination of these social changes has resulted in a redefinition of adulthood that is more stressing of autonomy. Many individuals consciously construct new adult lives by selecting among alternate roles. Adulthood, then, becomes increasingly contingent on individual choice rather than an age graded sequence of developmental stages.

While the traditional structure identified by the major models of the life course is still dominant, we hypothesize that American society now contains alternate structures for role production and reproduction.

Our review suggests that the developmental model is too tied to the notion of an imminent unfolding of the life course. The age-stratification theory recognizes the role reproduction required by the social structure but never questions the locus of reproductive power. Socialization theory grants the individual some interactive freedom with his or her environment but still overemphasizes the society's need for socialization of the individual into existing roles.

Life Spiral Model

A new model is required to more accurately reflect the varying patterns of adulthood.

We propose a life spiral model to reflect these competing models of adulthood. This model comprises the ordering of roles in a variety of sequences, the multiplicity of institutionalized and emerging adult roles, and the varying durations that these roles are enacted by different persons. In a three dimensional space, utilizing spiral patterns of different expansion or contraction, we can display typical patterns of role choices that vary in number and duration for different populations.

The life spiral model enables us to view the life course in terms of the varying patterns of roles that individuals enact. Whereas the cycle forces us to view individuals who do not follow the dominant pattern as deviants, the spiral allows us to view alternate patterns of adulthood from a comparative perspective. While the life cycle encompasses only one pattern of adulthood, the life spiral encompasses several patterns of adulthood.

A fully developed spiral model includes a conception of human needs that may be fulfilled through a variety of traditional and alternate adult roles. The expression of issues that developmental theorists view as stage related are seen by us as human needs that reoccur throughout the life course. Once material needs to insure survival such as food, shelter and clothing are satisfied, a second level of human needs becomes of central personal importance to most individuals.[8] Our formulation of these needs includes a desire for intimacy, meaningful work, avocational activities and social interaction. The constant in the spiral model is the necessity for the expression of these human needs.

The cycle implies that there is no return to a previous stage to resolve its particular issue anew. The spiral implies the possibility of changing roles and arriving at new resolutions regarding issues once presumed to have been settled. A cycle requires an invariant temporal pattern; a sequence of stages that occur in a specified progression. A spiral allows varying temporal patterns that occur without a necessary fixed order of events. The life spiral is a non age graded sequence of adult roles whereas the life cycle assumes that age determines the sequence of adult stages.

We will utilize our sample data and material from other studies to examine three issues:

1 - Do the life events of adult men and women follow the sequences identified by developmental models?

2 - Are the issues occurring within each stage as age graded as suggested by developmental models?

3 - Is there an increasing legitimation of adult roles formerly characterized as deviant?

The Life Spiral Study

The data presented in this paper is based on a re-analysis of a study conducted in 1975 with a sample of sixty women and men, ages 25 to 45.[10] Ninety percent held B.A. degrees and 45 percent held advanced degrees. Most were pursuing careers in the professions. These middle class adults represent a strategic sample for the examination of generalization based on life cycle studies of similar middle class populations.

Life Event Sequences

Perhaps the strongest critique of life events sequencing comes from studies of social class. Studies of working, middle and upper class men and women indicate that the personal resources necessary for the successful resolution of issues are strongly class determined.

While most studies of adulthood utilize middle class samples, a few recent studies provide data on working class adults. Lillian Rubin (1976), for example, indicates that working class men and women enter adulthood earlier than middle class subjects of other studies. The push of economic necessity forced the boys to work earlier than their middle class counterparts, to help supplement family incomes. For girls marriage provided the hoped-for path to personal happiness and the only way out from their parents' home.

Upper class members may have a greater option to face issues of adulthood at a later age than either working class or middle

class members. Their economic affluence has two effects: it may free members to choose among the variety of adult roles and experiences available or it may postpone their dealing with the crucial issues of independence from parents, identity, intimacy, and generativity.

The typical sequence of life events leading into adulthood in American society, according to recent studies by Marini (1978) and Hogan (1978), involve completion of schooling, entry into the labor force or the housewife role, entry into marriage, and entry into parenthood. This has been the traditional path of adulthood identified by life cycle models. However demographic, survey and interview data suggest that an increasing number of adult men and women do not follow this traditional path to adulthood.[11]

In several aspects the members of our sample did not follow the traditional path to adulthood. Their life course involved long-term singlehood, involvement with multiple relationships, experimenting with job and career possibilities, an exploration of vocational and avocational activities between the completion of school and full-time entry into the labor force, and a return to schooling in the mid and late twenties.[12] While major adult roles were occupied, the sequence of the occupancy varied.[13]

Stages and Ages

George Vaillant, in the Grant study of the class of 1942 of Harvard College, suggests that specific age definitions of middle life crises are as arbitrary as suggesting that adolescent crises occur at sixteen (1977:223). "Certainly there were many men in the

study who between 35 and 50 got divorced, changed jobs, and became depressed. However, divorce, job disenchantment, and depression occur with roughly equal frequency throughout the adult life cycle. ... Progression in the life cycle necessitates growth and change; but crisis is the exception, not the rule" (1977:223).

The results reported by Leonard Pearlin (1978) and his colleagues in a study of 2,300 adults aged 18 to 65 also question the validity of stage theory. Pearlin reports that the years 40 to 55 are not the stage of life in which "turbulence, hardship, and crises are especially prominent" (1978:4). With respect to work it is "the younger workers who are most likely to experience an accumulation of occupational problems and strains" (1978:5). In examining the psychological effects related to occupational, marriage and parenting roles, he found that the "relatively enduring problems and strains" are not concentrated at any specific "arc of the life cycle" and that young adults are "most vulnerable to the stresses of social and economic strains and vicissitudes" (1978:8). Our data also indicate that issues such as identity, intimacy and generativity, in many cases, did not surface "on time" but often preceded or followed the age prescribed for its resolution.

For some in our sample the rejection of earlier, more tentative occupational choices did not crystalize until the late twenties and early thirties, so that the transitional period (for Levinson 28-32) with its considerable turmoil, confusion, and struggle with society and with oneself did not occur until ages 32-35. About 40 percent postponed "entry into the adult world" because they were in

graduate school or professional school. About 20 percent were unable to break economic and psychological ties with their family of origin until their early thirties. Rather their lives fit the pattern identified as transadulthood, typified by "experimenting with different life styles, searching for career orientations, and the desire to keep options open" (Greenwald and Danziger, 1974:9).

While developmental models of adulthood, most notably Levinson's work, indicate that specific issues are dealt with in each stage and each transition through the lifecourse, the studies cited here suggest that there is little evidence to indicate that issues are symbiotically linked to age stages.

Legitimation of Alternate Adult Roles

The availability of structures of legitimation for alternative adult roles is also class linked. A variety of studies suggest that among the working class the life cycle model is perceived as the only path to adulthood. In Lillian Rubin's study (1976), both males and females perceived marriage and setting up their household (building a nest) as the way to become adults. Yet they also knew from their own childhood experiences that their own marriages might not work. They saw no alternative to it.

Sheehy's (1976), Gould's (1978) and Vaillant's (1977) studies indicate that the availability of resources to upper middle class individuals aid them to successfully negotiate the issues and crises of adulthood. Similarly for members of our sample, a more or less secure economic base provided a major resource for dealing

with the issues of adulthood. But equally important were the interpersonal relationships that bonded their lives. Membership in friendship networks helped provide the interpersonal resource necessary to negotiate their deviant roles.

In their departure from a major traditional adult role, these single adults noted the importance of substitute networks of human relationships that provided the basic satisfactions of intimacy, sharing, and continuity. Although some pressure from external sources to leave singlehood continued, their membership in various support networks and in validating reference groups enabled them to discount negative evaluations. Such support networks include women's and men's groups, political groups, therapy and encounter groups, and organizations formed around specialized interests. Although not restricted to singles, they are particularly well adapted to meet the needs of single people. These groups were cited as helpful in legitimizing alternative roles and dealing with critical life events.

Conclusion

We have critically reviewed three major models used in the study of adulthood and compared a study of adults using the life cycle model with data from our study. Although we are aware of the limitations of our sample, the results, nevertheless, suggest a re-evaluation of the life cycle model. By raising these questions we have begun a reconceptualization of adulthood.

What is needed is a full analysis of the processes whereby adult roles are originated, legitimated, delegitimated, produced,

and reproduced. Our planned follow-up study, utilizing the life spiral model, will contribute to this goal.

While the traditional structure identified by the life cycle model is still dominant, we hypothesize that American society now contains alternate structures of role production and reproduction. The existence of alternate paths through adulthood requires a new model such as the life spiral.

FOOTNOTES

1. Observers of American life styles have noted that increasing numbers of persons are breaking the life cycle pattern of career, marriage, parenthood, retirement, etc. (Bernard, 1975; Duberman, 1977; Glick, 1977; Slater, 1976; Gagnon and Greenblat, 1978). These persons include men and women who are experiencing employment and career changes (Brim, 1975); women who are questioning the traditional female role (Giele, 1972; 1976); the increasing number of persons divorcing or separating (Weiss, 1975; 1977); growth in the number of single parents (Kohen and Feldberg, 1977); the postponement of marriage on the parts of men and women (Adams, 1976; Stein, 1978); development of alternative life styles, including communal living (Ferrar, 1977; Kanter, 1972); long term singlehood (Stein, 1976); the emergence of homosexual communities (Oberstone and Sukoneck, 1976); sexual experimentation (Laws and Schwartz, 1977; Libby, 1977); and the development of friendship support networks such as women's, men's and therapy groups (Eisenman, 1977; Pleck and Brannon, 1978).

2. The demographic extent of these shifts are documented in a number of sources. Labor force reports indicate substantial occupational mobility. For example almost one-third of all 1965 workers transferred to a different occupation by 1970. More than twice as many workers switched occupations as left the labor force entirely (Monthly Labor Review, 1977:3). Between January 1965 and January 1966 about 5.5 million workers of almost 70 million employed worked in an occupation different from the one held a year earlier (Monthly Labor Review, 1967). However, these survey data also indicate that shifts from blue-collar to white-collar occupations were relatively uncommon. Moreover, 60 percent of those who changed occupations were under 35 years of age and the rates were higher for men than for women (1967:31).

   Changes in household composition are related to labor force participation. For example, in March 1975, about 12.3 percent of the female labor force was either separated or divorced, compared to 10.7 percent in 1970. "Seventy-two percent of the 4 million divorced women in the U.S. were in the labor force, compared to 55% of the 3 million separated women, and 44% of the 47.5 million married women living with their husbands" (Grossman, 1977). However the income of households headed by women continues to be dramatically lower than that of households headed by men. Fewer than 30 percent of households headed by women reported incomes in 1974 as high as $10,000 compared with 70 percent of families headed by men living with their wives (Special Labor Force Report 190).

   The structure of "households" indicates that currently only about 16 percent involve a father as sole breadwinner, mother as a full-time homemaker and at least one child (Stein, Richman and Hannon, 1977). Eighteen and one-half percent include both the father and

mother as wage earners and one or more children at home. Thirty and one-half percent of households consist of married couples with no children or with no children living at home; 6.2 percent are headed by women who are single parents, compared to 0.6 percent of households headed by single parent males. Two and one-half percent consist of unrelated persons living together, while a full 20.6 percent are single person households.

3. Erikson's theory of ego development spans the entire life cycle from birth to death. Erikson incorporates the effects of maturation, life experiences, and the impact of social institutions on the growing individual. Neugarten notes that for Erikson, "the resolutions of ego crises are seen as determining the future development of the personality, the individual's success in adapting to both inner- and outer-world demands, and his evaluation of self" (1968:85). While a different issue constitutes the major crises for the ego at each developmental stage, the same issue is also present in preceding and later stages. Thus while the issue of ego identity is the major issue of adolescence, it is also present in adulthood and old age, though in "a form modified by the individual's life history, and by the degree of his success in meeting the earlier crises. A solution at any given stage of ego development has its effects on all subsequent stages" (1968:85-86). These resolutions constitute the individual's inner reality and relation to the outer world at each level of development.

   For Neugarten the interaction between the organism and the environment also results in adaptive change that occurs in an orderly, progressive manner (Marshall, 1976:5). As Marshall notes, this personality change can be either "a response to external situations (reactive) or an anticipation in preparation for some age-related task or crises (developmental)." Change failing to occur in an orderly manner is not, by definition, regarded as developmental. There are "inner" regularities of the life cycle that are age-related, and there are adaptations or purposive behavior oriented toward the outer world that are not developmental. In 1973 Neugarten continued to identify a major task as involving the study of "sequences of change for the purpose of determining which ones are primarily developmental (in the sense of being tied to maturational change) and which ones are primarily situational -- if indeed, this distinction can be made at all" (Neugarten and Datan, 1973).

4. Powdermaker concluded that, "Kinship ties are more persistent than the sentiments underlying the status positions of age and youth. The relative youthfulness of African political leaders symbolizes well the shift in the status positions of age versus youth. Young people are not only breaking from the domination of Europeans, but also from their own fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other tribal authority figures" (Powdermaker, 1962).

5. These changes include the expectations and demands others have for oneself, one's own changing expectations and demands on the self, role or status change, occupational shifts or entry into new occupations, changes in one's family, and social or geographical mobility.

6. Many of these movements such as the Civil Rights and the Women's movements were the outgrowth of decades and even centuries of struggle while others, such as the anti-war movement, grew rapidly as a result of the expansion of the Vietnam war. Prior to the growth of these movements individuals who expressed non-traditional value commitments existed as isolated individuals or small groups of deviants.

This issue may be more fully examined by integrating the 1970's studies of adults with the studies of 1960's youth. Studies of youth in the 1960's postulated several different outcomes. Lipset (1971) held that the youth of the 60's who had experimented with political activism and alternate life styles would, as they grew older, revert to traditional patterns. Flacks (1971), on the other hand, expected that the radical activism and alternate life styles developed by American youth in the 60's would precipitate a major shift in adult values and role structures. Schaflander (1971) articulates a middle position. Schaflander found in a study of 60's college youth that three broad types were emerging: 1. traditional, 2. radical/hippy, and 3. marginal ambivalent. The marginal ambivalents, estimated at 30 to 40 percent of the national college student population of the late 1960's, are typified by value conflicts and lack of permanent resolution regarding role choices. Their values were in flux "as they groped for an explanation of what (was) happening in Vietnam, in the ghettos, on the campuses and within themselves." They questioned "their own identity, sexuality, acceptability, maturity and future goals" (1971:269).

This pattern of ambivalence seems to persist into adulthood for some. Issues to be resolved include degree of political involvement; marriage or continued singlehood; degree of equality in male-female relationships; work as a job or more meaningful contribution to society. As indicated above, the men and women of our sample re-evaluated education, and career and relationship choices throughout their twenties and thirties.

While some observers hypothesized that these developments were structurally tied to specific generational units of the 1960's, the participation of older persons in social movements and the subsequent spread of these alternative adult roles to both earlier and later generational cohorts argues against the generational specificity of these social developments.

7. Recent films include Paul Mazursky's "Unmarried Woman" and Claudia Weil's "Girl Friends." Both portray the lives of women who are either forced out of or do not choose to follow the traditional female adult role. In recent years the women's novel has emerged, in which great dissatisfaction is expressed with the traditional role model. TV situation comedies, once populated almost entirely by 2 adult, 2 child nuclear families, now include single parent families and single adults.

8. "Natural needs" refer to the simple maintenance of human life (self preservation), and are "naturally necessary" simply because without satisfying them, man is not able to preserve himself as a mere natural being (Heller, 1974:31). Need fulfillment is often limited by institutional suppression or individual repression. In particular circumstances the expression of needs may be suppressed or subsumed by a tertiary level of manipulated needs. As suggested by Marcuse (1964), advertising creates a desire for the accumulation of consumer goods and deflects people from attending to the secondary level of need satisfaction.

9. John Clausen, in his comprehensive review of the literature on the life course, notes that "data from long-range longitudinal studies that extend well into the adult years suggest that far more personality change takes place beyond childhood than had previously been recognized" (1972:500). Clausen, in his description of the life course in the contemporary United States, cautions the reader that his portrait yields "valid information about the typical life course" only in the absence of social change. "Are such relationships ... noted plausible for the entire set of cohorts in the society in the light of the changes in norms and social structure that have occurred over time?" (1972:465). The question he raises about the accuracy of typical life courses is the one that is at the core of our analysis.

10. This study was reported by Stein (1976). The sample was initially chosen to examine the life styles and life course events of unmarried adult men and women, a segment of the adult population that has been notably understudied. The members of the sample, in maintaing or returning to an unmarried state, deviated from a major cultural prescription for adulthood -- marriage.

    The average age of the men was thirty-five, of the women thirty. Ninety percent held B.A. degrees and forty-five percent had advanced degrees. Women's occupations included architecture, interior design, freelance writing, research biology, psychiatry, computer programming, social work, middle-level management, teaching in grammar school, high school and in college. Men's occupations included the practice of law, high school and college teaching, medicine, psychiatry, engineering, music composition, writing of screenplays, social work, hospital administration, and magazine publishing.

Sample members lived in the metropolitan areas of New York City and Boston, Mass. At the time of the interview about two-thirds lived alone, and one-third lived with one or more roommates. Among the sixty persons, there were fifty whites, five Blacks and five Hispanics. All were heterosexually oriented. About one-half had been married or had cohabitated.

11. Although the popularity of marriage continues, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of adults who are unmarried, including those who are postponing first marriages, those who are separated, divorced, widowed or are single parents. For example, the sixteen year period between 1960 and 1976 has seen a 13 percent increase in the percentage of men 20-29 who have remained unmarried and a 19 percent increase in women who have remained unmarried.

With the increase of young adults who remain single has come the tendency for these people to maintain their own households. The number of persons under age 35 who were living alone doubled between 1970 and 1975, increasing from 1.5 million to 3 million. A somewhat larger proportion of single women than of single men in the 25 to 34 age group maintained their own households.

The U.S. Census reports that over 1 million couples cohabit and that more than one quarter of a million men and women under the age of 25 were reported to be sharing quarters with an unrelated partner of the opposite sex (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1977).

Glick (1975:4) notes that "it is too early to predict with confidence that the increase in singleness among the young will lead to an eventual decline in life-time marriage, (but) just as cohorts of young women who have postponed childbearing for an unusually long time seldom make up for the child deficit as they grow older, so also young people who are delaying marriage may never make up for the marriage deficit later on. They may try alternatives to marriage and they may like them."

12. These activities included full-time political activism, participation in rural communes, and a mixture of part-time jobs and artistic endeavors.

13. We also found these differences in sequencing between our sample and the men studied by Levinson (1978). Levinson reports that between the ages of about 32 and 39, there is a "settling down" period, consisting of two major aspects: (1) "settling in" -- order, stability, control, security -- building a nest; and (2) "making it" -- mobility, ambition, planning, striving.

Our data also suggest that "settling in" may not necessarily be related to this age period. By the age of thirty-two all but one of Levinson's forty men were married. In contrast, and

bearing in mind the bias built into our sample, fewer than ten percent of our members were married during this "settling down" period. Moreover, for our once-married adults, this period was characterized by the turmoil of separation and divorce. For the entire sample of 30-year-olds (N = 44), these years were typified by greater flux with respect to interpersonal relationships, greater geographical mobility, self-conscious personality changes, and greater ambivalence about their degree of control over their lives than reported by Levinson's men.

Moreover there is a greater variety in household types. With respect to "settling in" the portrait that emerges from Levinson's data suggests that there is one major pattern of settling in and building a nest involving the ownership of property, the raising of children, and owning a home. The settling in experience for unmarrieds is qualitatively different in terms of the type of community lived in and the type of nest built. The identification with one's place of residence seems less permanent and more easily changed.

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